

3. (no change) The method of claim 1 wherein each speech frame is associated with the same user.
4. (no change) The method of claim 3 wherein a speech header associated with only one speech frame is encoded.
5. (once amended) The method of claim 1 wherein each speech frame is generated by a full-rate encoder.
7. (once amended) The method of claim 1 wherein each speech frame is generated by a half-rate encoder.
8. (no change) The method of claim 7 in which four speech frames are encoded into a block.
9. (once amended) The method of claim 2 wherein each speech frame includes a set of Class I bits and a set of Class II bits, the method further comprising: encoding a first speech frame by encoding at least a portion of the header and the set of Class I bits; encoding a second speech frame by encoding at least a portion of the header and the set of Class I bits.
10. (once amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the speech frames are for transmission on the down-link of a wireless packet switched network.
11. (once amended) The method of claim 9 wherein each encoding step comprises encoding two different portions of each header using two different encoding techniques.
12. (once amended) The method of claim 9 wherein the Class I bits and a portion of each header are encoded using a convolution code.

13. (once amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the remainder of the header is encoded using a block code.
14. (once amended) The method of claim 10 in which the two speech frames are arranged, prior to encoding, such that they are adjacent.
15. (once amended) The method of claim 10 in which the two speech frames are arranged, prior to encoding, such that the Class I bits of the two users are adjacent thereby forming a first and second set of sequential Class I bits.
16. (once amended) The method of claim 10, in which the last  $n$  bits of the first sequential set of Class I bits are removed prior to encoding, wherein the  $n$  bits correspond to  $n$  zero bits provided for an encoder with a constrain length of  $n+1$ .
17. (once amended) The method of claim 10 in which the coding step further involves the step of puncturing bits.
18. (no change) The method of claim 17 wherein only the convolution code for encoding the Class I bits involves puncturing of bits.
19. (once amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the speech frames are for transmission on the up-link of the packet radio network, wherein the Class I bits and the header are encoded using a convolution code.
20. (once amended) The method of claim 1 in which the single block includes a set of spare bits.
21. (once amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the speech frames are for transmission on the up-link of the packet radio network,

22. (no change) The method of claim 21 wherein the Class I bits and the header of each speech frame are encoded using a convolution code.
23. (no change) The method of claim 22, the encoding step further involving the step of puncturing bits.
24. (once amended) The method of claim 1 in which the single block additionally includes a set of stealing bits.